

## Reading about September 11

Patrizia Orioli (August 29, 2011)



The countdown to the tenth anniversary of the terror attacked that has changed history has started. There are many different ways of telling the same story and there are books for all those who are interested in knowing more.

September 11 ten years later. The countdown to the anniversary has started. People discuss, still have plenty of questions to ask, they have their own stories about where they were that day...

There are many different ways of telling the same story... there even is an autobiographic graphic novel, it is one of the many stories of a tragedy that, ten years later and after the killing of the mastermind behind it, Osama Bin Laden, it is still so big that the truth behind it is unknown.

The theories continue to abound, and that is shown by the continuous publications of books on the subject. [Rizzoli](#) [2] is republishing *The Rage and the Pride* a manifesto against the Jihad signed by Oriana Fallaci. On [Amazon](#) [3] the book gets four out of five stars and the description says: "With her



well-known courage Oriana Fallaci faces the themes unchained by the Islamic terrorism: the contrast and, in her opinion, incompatibility between the Islamic world and the Western world; the global reality of the Jihad and the lack of response, the lenience of the West. With her brutal sincerity she hurls pitiless accusations, vehement invectives, and denounces the uncomfortable truths that all of us know but never dare to express. With her rigorous logic, lucidity of mind, she defends our culture and blames what she calls our blindness, our deafness, our masochism, the conformism and the arrogance of the Politically Correct. With the poetry of a prophet like a modern Cassandra she says it in the form of a letter addressed to all of us. The text is enriched by a dramatic preface in which Oriana Fallaci reveals how *The Rage and the Pride* was born, grew up, and detachedly calls it 'my small book.' In addition, a preface in which she tells significant episodes of her extraordinary life and explains her unreachable isolation, her demanding and inflexible choices. Because of this too, what she calls "my small book" is in reality a great book. A precious book, a book that shakes our conscience. It is also the portrait of a soul. Her soul. No doubt it will remain as a thorn pierced inside our brains and our hearts."

Oriana Fallaci is also the subject of a book+DVD special that will be released in Italy in September called *Intervista con Oriana* (Interview with Oriana), a portrait of the journalist seen through her video interviews.

The true story of [Alissa Torres](#) [4], the young bride of Edoardo, a young Colombian immigrant, is the tale of a seven month pregnant girl who, the day of the World Trade Center attacks is robbed of her husband and is told in the aforementioned graphic novel, titled *American Widow*. The book, is written by Torres herself and features drawings by the Korean artist Sungyoon Choi, known for her comic strips in the *New York Times*. It tells the story of the attack, of her pain due to the loss of the love of her life, the horror of bureaucratic matters, the difficulty to have access to funds available to all the victim's relatives, and the exploitation of the media and solidarity associations.

Eraldo Affinati tells the story of a tragedy to a younger readership... children. His novel *L'11 settembre di Eddy il ribelle* (September 11 as seen by Eddy the Rebel), not available in the US yet, is set on a fictional planet, called Fulgor, where everybody is trying to forget war and death. Eddy lives on that planet, and one day, after having been expelled from school, he goes on the OX promontory with his friend Matuzalem. The two witness the tragedy of the Twin Towers from up there and this event will change them forever.

The true drama of those moments is also told by Giorgio Radicati, who on that day was the Italian Consul General in New York. *Io c'erò* (I was there), edited by Giuliano Capecebatro is in first person narration and it alternates real events with the personal thoughts and reactions of the Consul, and 32 unpublished photos. It is a very suggestive chronicle and first person narration that makes the reader dive into the terror of that day.

The crash of the myth of invincibility of the United States is the topic of *12 Settembre*, an international project that will be released at the same time in Italy, France, The Netherlands, Spain, Germany and the United States that includes the opinions of authors and artists such as Art Spiegelman, Lorenzo Mattotti, Joe Sacco, Bilal and Sampayo.

This is not the first September 11 related book for Spiegelman. The Pulitzer Prize winning author of *Maus*, published in 2004 *In the Shadow of No Towers*, what Amazon describes as "an inventive and vividly graphic work of nonfiction. It's an artful rant focused on the events of 9/11 and afterward by a world-class pessimist ("after all, disaster is my muse"). The artist, who lives in downtown Manhattan, believes the world really ended on Sept. 11, 2001—it's merely a technicality that some people continue to go about their daily lives. He provides a hair-raising and wry account of his family's frantic efforts to locate one another on September 11 as well as a morbidly funny survey of his trademark sense of existential doom. "I'm not even sure I'll live long enough," says a chain-smoking, post-9/11 cartoon-mouse Spiegelman, "for cigarettes to kill me." The book is a visceral tirade against the Bush administration ("brigands suffering from war fever") and, when least expected, an erudite meditation on the history of the American newspaper comic strip, born during the fierce circulation wars of the 1890s right near the World Trade Center site in lower Manhattan."



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